



SLOVENSKO PANEVROPSKO GIBANJE

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Dear President,

Dear Paneuropean friends,

First of all, let me thank you for inviting me to this very important conference in a moment that calls for deeper consideration about our common future as well as deeper understanding of international trends.

Personally, I am honored to stay here in front of you today, given that I consider myself very close to Slovakia not only because I come from a place with a common historical heritage – I was born in a town that historians claim was part of the Great Moravia – or due to the similarities between our languages, flags and even the names of our states, or only because of the nice moments I have spent in your country in the past, but also due to your national anthem. Yes, it is true that we can find similarities with Slovenia also in this case: both were written in 1844; however, in my high school times I studied many different national anthems and I fell in love with yours for its music and for its simplicity.

“NAD TATROU SA BLYSKA / HROMY DIVO BIJU!”

Could be considered symbolic for the whole of Europe, at any time.

We live in a fluent era that is heading toward a new world order which will, surely, influence and will be influenced by a new European order. A new European order that will be shaped on a combination of internal and external factors. We live a new historical period. Our “order” begins acknowledging the EU’s physical borders *sic rebus stantibus*, today. The EU border issue plays a pivotal role in understanding our problems and in defining our political agenda. The EU has 2 open borders: one to the south and one to the east. Thirty years after the country was granted candidate status, Turkey’s EU membership is a false problem. Ankara will not be a member of EU, Ankara does not want to be a member of EU! Turkish politicians no longer need the safe belt of a European perspective in order to guarantee a future for themselves and for the people, and furthermore, they are no longer ready to be misused for undermining EU cohesion on behalf of Anglo-Saxon political interests, given that more EU enlargement should bring less unity for the EU. From our side, I am sure France and Germany (at least) would never accept Turkey as a full member, since this would mean the country would have the largest population in the EU and consequently the most MEPs. This would be an unacceptable situation for our old powers, even putting aside for a while the issue of religion. The government in Ankara has different priorities now. They are trying to become a credible regional power on their own, promoting their economic and soft-power attraction from Ujguristan to Rabat. However, a special relation with Turkish government should always be maintained. It is a growing economy, it is our neighborhood and it is an important player in the Balkan region.

In the east, we have the burning issue of Ukraine, where the EU has made the same mistake NATO did with Georgia in 2008. Between 2006 and 2008, the USA officially intensified its dialog with Georgia, putting too much trust in “partisan politicians” forgetting the basic rule that geopolitics is made up from a static and a holistic component. Static geography cannot be manipulated, while holistic policy must be correctly interpreted. Approaching Ukraine, Western politicians lacked, once again, understanding of history and the potential negative consequences of their hasty decisions. Kiev is a capital of a diversified country located, so far, between two geopolitical worlds. Everything is possible, even to imagine Russia in the EU one day, but only using the right approach at the proper moment. The EU is a path of common goals and standardization toward which nobody should be forced, as our countries have not been forced. Internal consensus is required! Russia is part of the European community, but it is not part of European political institutions. Smart European politicians should never forget that national geopolitical interests are hard to change and that Ukraine is a state with a specific geographic position, which, if wisely used, could be of great advantage. However, if it is used unwisely, it can be of great damage to everybody.

In the second part of the previous decade, Bush, Merkel and Putin met in order to fix a sort of a new Yalta Agreement based on the acceptance of no more NATO and EU enlargements, except for the Balkan region, and respect for the Russian sphere of influence. Realpolitik. Raison d'état. For the time being, a good tactical decision balancing the interests of each side. Now, I ask myself why we have broken this thin stability, believing Ukraine's divided and corrupted political elite and forgetting our official and more than real priority of the Balkans! We have fallen in a trap, leaving the Balkan states hanging.

It is already clear to everybody that foreign policy will not be a top priority for the Juncker Commission! First: he openly declared that the most, only, successful EU foreign policy, the enlargement, will be frozen for the whole term. Second: he gave the position of first Commission Vice President to somebody coordinating economic issues instead of giving it, as has been the case so far, to the EU High Representative for Foreign Policy. Forgetting to give a medium-term, potential, EU perspective to our Balkan friends is a bad signal that can affect our stability or future security, especially when the battle for the influence in Central Europe is ongoing among old powers! For those reasons, we should start to think about a new model of regional cooperation. Something that is above the Visegrad Group, above the Danubian Strategy or the Alps Adria cooperation. Metternich once wrote that stability does not mean inactivity! In order to protect EU institutions from always being adopted as an excuse for national political failures, in order to guarantee a future of development and wellbeing and in order to ensure effective regional cooperation among states through a tool that can give us greater weight, I think, distinguished MEP, it is time for us to propose the creation of a Mitteleuropean group inside the EU Parliament. Our leaders should start to discuss the possibility of creating in the near future a sort of a Central European BENELUX: a closer coordination among our states that could give us ways for deeper dialog, new competitive added value in synergy with the EU! Nobody but us, Central Europeans, knows

better about the importance of geopolitics! Especially GEOgraphy! We have inherited from our ancestors a special feeling for appetites of big powers, a unique understanding of balance of power theory and a survival instinct from the disasters provoked by decisions of insane politicians. Institutionalized collaboration, based on our common history, values, problems and past experience is far safer and far cheaper than dozens of bilateral relations. Central Europe could even be considered a civilization. For this reason, it is our duty to find proper solutions that will not crumble at the first thunder and lightning, helping us to complete the stabilization of our young, inexperienced democracies. Common solidarity is a very Christian value but at the same time also the realization of often forgotten EU subsidiarity: let us act and let us take decisions at the most appropriate level, closer to citizens! Only in this way will we liberate the EU from fatal burdens.

In the 90s, forgetting its own roots and initial steps, the EU shifted, probably too fast, from a functional to a unionist approach. As already stressed today, everything can be done but at the right time. In order to control Germany, France boosted a process that unfortunately still lacks in structures, pertaining nevertheless an important cession of sovereignty in exchange for no real political guaranties. The result is that today's EU is far from being the union that Kalergi or even Spinelli dreamed of, the founding fathers, or the one that Otto von Habsburg wanted for us. The point is that we lost our way for reaching the goal. A lack of vision, a lack of well prepared political elites, a lack of clear priorities based on the common ground of values and interests could be fatal in an environment characterized by an unstable economic situation. Economic crises in history have too often been harbingers of disaster. Within this framework, the Mitteleuropean region is once again in its history brought to the center of the international scene. Due to our heritage, we Central Europeans know the meaning of being "a land in the middle between giants". We know the meaning of mutual security! Our nations completed their romantic path almost twenty-five years ago reaching full independence. A path favoured by the presence of the European Communities! Today, we live in a fragmented, complex regional environment that is facing a new raise of nationalism, the reign of unsuitable political elites and the inability to be a credible counterpart in international dialog, suffering at the same time the consequences of plans of major powers.

For our safety and for the safety of the EU, we should start contemplating our own Scandinavian or Benelux approach, implementing common wellbeing policies and not only supporting selfish decisions of individual states. The progress of this is not fated or automatic. Good governance is not granted *per se* by democracy. Most of our politicians represent a sort of an ancient regime, outdated, self-referencing and often incompetent and corrupt. We must jump over the black hole of passive nihilism being projected in our future. History goes on, we cannot wait passively. There will surely be a new European order. We have at least two good reasons to become protagonists of the change: the social development and geopolitical concerns!

Dear friends,

Closing this speech, let me reaffirm you that there are thunders and lightening but

TO EUROPY NAŠE / POSIAL' TVRDO SPALO/ ALE BLESKY HROMU/ VZBUDZUJU HO K TOMU/
ABY SA PREBRALO!

Thank you for your attention!